

DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY

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THE MAPPING OF TIME IN THE HUNGARIAN, CZECH AND GERMAN
LANGUAGES

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1. The relevance of the research

The subject of my doctoral dissertation is the analysis within the framework of cognitive linguistic and translation studies of how the concept of time is mapped in language, as well as the study of how time-expressions are created and translated.

In my research I investigate on concrete target language solutions, the cases where translators can choose from existing time-expressions in the target language, and also whether in case of lacking the needed lexical unit in the target language, translators appeal to simplifications, metaphorization, implicitations or explicitations. Furthermore, I examine whether certain target language solutions reflect national or individual time concepts.

The concept of time in language has been investigated by several linguists (e.g. Traugott 1978, Evans 2005, Szamarsz 2006), however, the comprehensive analysis of the source domains of time has not been carried out until now. Thus, the aim of my research is to contribute to the comprehensive mapping of these source domains within language (intralinguistic), and by revealing the processes of metaphor-creation between different languages (interlinguistic).

Furthermore, my dissertation fills a gap also in the sense that potential metaphors inherent to the combinational potential of language have been only peripherally examined by cognitive linguists (e.g. Lakoff–Johnson 1980, Kövecses 2005). For the comprehensive illustration of time-expressions, in my dissertation I supplemented the concrete examples with further potential solutions, through which I illustrate how time-metaphors can be created and what possibilities exist for word-formation in language. The possible time-metaphors listed after each chapter and after the concrete examples demonstrate how it is possible to create new time metaphors by emphasising and extending certain elements.

2. The structure of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of four parts: introduction, theoretical background, analysis and summary.

The introduction presents the relevance of the research, the researched corpus, the examination methodology, the auxiliary research materials, the research hypotheses and a number of raised questions.

The theoretical background of the research presents the theories of 19th and 20th century philosophers of language engaged in the study of language, culture and thinking that are relevant to the dissertation, and the results of cognitive semantics. Following that I examine the different definitions of meaning, I tackle the issue of translatability, I present the

translation-theory terms used in my dissertation, the time concepts of well-known scientists and artists, and finally, the definitions of time given by various dictionaries.

The third part contains the collection of examples, which illustrate how the enlisted theories are applied in practice. Time metaphors are ranked according to the categories set up by cognitive semantics, and the examples are analysed within the framework of translation theory from the point of view of the different operations carried out by translators.

In the final part, I summarize the results of the research, point out its benefits and outline possible directions for future researches.

3. The researched corpus

When compiling the corpus that constitutes the subject of the analysis my main objective was to choose Hungarian source texts that have been translated to both target languages. Furthermore, it was an important aspect that these texts should be written in contemporary language, and by different authors, thus, offering a larger repertoire of metaphors for research. Based on the above-mentioned considerations, I chose works of contemporary authors written in contemporary Hungarian language. Since in my analysis I deal with literary texts, my work consists of relatively homogeneous linguistic examples, however, the works of the different writers represent different stylistic values (are more or less metaphorised).

My doctoral dissertation examines exclusively the time-expressions used in the original Hungarian works and translated into the two above-mentioned Indo-European languages, namely the analysis is carried out on Hungarian → Czech and Hungarian → German examples; in my thesis I do not deal with translations in the opposite direction and cross translations.

The results of the final selection, the 142 concrete examples, come from five target language sources and their translations (see the exact references in the *List of Literary sources*).

4. The methodology of research and example collection

The dissertation investigates expressions related to time, compound words, collocations and idioms, expressions with time-units and time-periods, which I then compare to the adequate metaphors of the works in the target languages. My examples serve to present the concrete and potential linguistic mappings of the concept of time.

The methodology of the research is a parallel qualitative analysis of the triple linguistic corpus. The search of keywords covers both the source and the target texts.

5. Auxiliary materials

In order to assess whether the examples are widely used or only hapax legomenon-like literary metaphors, in my dissertation, beyond the examples taken from the above-mentioned literary texts, I also examine other literary texts, dictionaries, thesauruses, and phrase books.

6. Research hypotheses and raised questions

In my thesis I try to prove the following hypotheses and give answers to the following questions:

First hypothesis

From a content-based and logical point of view the three nations (Hungarian, Czech and German), living in each other's vicinity have conceptualized time in a similar way. Consequently, the time metaphors of nations living in the same region present more *similarities* than *differences*. The similarities of the source domains are based on the Central European people's empirical knowledge and way of thinking.

First question

To what reasons can one attributed the universality and culture-specificity of the mentioned time expressions?

Second hypothesis

In the analysed literary texts there are many individual metaphors due to the fact that creative time expressions are more frequent in literary texts.

Second group of questions

To what extent do the writers use everyday or individual time metaphors, or in other words, what is the difference between the writers' and the „average” language user's use of language? When can we speak of universal time metaphor, and when are time expressions considered national or individual? Are there examples for everyday translation of creative time metaphors and vice versa?

Third hypothesis

Everyday and literary metaphors can be traced back to the same conceptual sources (Lakoff–Turner 1989).

Third question

Are there any metaphors used in literature that are unknown or have an origin that is hard to trace back?

Fourth hypothesis

The EVENTS ARE ACTIONS metaphor is rarer in IE languages, because very often instead of action verbs empty, contentless verbs are used to express the occurrence of an event. The monolexemic verbs that in the source text express the start of an action or a change in state are split up in IE languages (Klaudy 2007b: 82).

Fourth group of questions

Do IE languages express the occurrence of a season, or time of day more often with passive constructions? Are composite forms really more dominant in the examined target languages?

Fifth hypothesis

Both in everyday German and in the dictionary definition the word *Morgen* 'Morning' is used instead of *dawn*. In translation theory this method is called the generalization of meaning (Klaudy 2007a: 57).

Fifth group of questions

Do German translators make finer distinctions when translating dawn metaphors in case of literary translations? Do Czech translators resort to generalization or specification of meaning during translation?

7. Conclusions

Although the „real” worldview of target language users and translators can be revealed only through target language texts, the dictionary and textual solutions support the similarities between the Hungarian, Czech and German language users' cognitive worldview. In most of the cases time metaphors and their translations presented in the dissertation are the same in the sense of the components that form the syntagmas and word combinations: the source projections are the same or very similar in their elaboration and their composition (e.g. Hungarian: *élete virágjában*, Czech: *v rozkvětu života*, German: *in der Blüte seines Lebens*).

Even in the case of metaphors that are linguistically formulated in a different way, one can come to very similar logical conclusions: e.g. HEIGHT IS IMPORTANCE (Hungarian: *itt az ideje*, Czech: *nejvyšší čas*, German: *die höchste Zeit*).

In the examples presented in the dissertation the time concept of the three different nations differs only in some very typical culture-specific time expression. The existence of metaphors showing little deviations can briefly be summarized as follows: „We cannot expect the exact same metaphors to occur in all languages, but we cannot expect metaphors that contradict universal human experience, either.” (Kövecses 2005: 88).

The reason for similarity can be sought in translation only in the case of creative time metaphors; in most of the cases the reason lies in the similarity of metaphors that exist in the three languages.

8. The results and benefits of the research

In my dissertation I analyse the occurrence of creative and conventional time metaphors in the Hungarian, German and Czech languages on examples taken from concrete literary texts. In addition to the examples mentioned in cognitive linguistics and translation theory studies, I confirm or refute the valid approaches within the framework of these two disciplines by presenting further linguistic and translation phenomena and examples.

My examples reflect and summarize all time-segments, time-periods and time-units (human time, calendric time, infinite time etc.) and, as much as possible, the source domains: e.g. TIME IS A LIVING BEING, TIME IS SUBSTANCE, TIME IS A CONTAINER, TIME IS AN OBJECT, and TIME IS VALUE. The findings of the present research contribute to, combine and complement the researches of cognitive linguistics and translation theory.

Furthermore, in my thesis I completed the transfer operations used in translation theory with two additional operations that help the analysis of literary texts: metaphorization, and metaphor simplification.

My research points out that cognitive linguistics and linguistic relativity are theories that do not exclude one another: on one hand, they prove that different nations have different concepts for representing reality, and on the other hand, they emphasize the universality that „our way of thinking is embedded into our physical and cultural reality” (Kövecses–Benczes 2010: 13).

Through the collected target language examples both the similarities and differences in the way of thinking and logics of the different languages/translators become evident. I aimed to present the processes of metaphor creation, the creation of new concepts and to describe the

often-instinctive processes that occur during the creation and translation of literary texts through the analyses of these connections and, consequently, by drawing my own conclusions.

The analysis of these literary texts from the point of view of translation practice can contribute to the training of translators and to language teaching, as the Hungarian, Czech and German examples can fulfil their goals not only as research, but also as educational materials, since „interlinguistic comparison may facilitate the teaching and learning of foreign languages” (Földes 2000: 103). The practical contribution of the analysed examples lies in the exploration of cognitive motivations (Kövecses 2005: 204), in the explanatory approach, as the analysis points out the processes of selection and combination, emphasis and omission. The dissertation familiarizes the reader with how the source and target domains of metaphors form a common meaning, what kind of cognitive mechanisms play a role in the creation and understanding of metaphors, and furthermore, draws one’s attention to the fact that the steps of metaphor creation can be consciously disclosed. In addition, the present thesis points out that the deciphering of semantic motivations does not require more than ordinary knowledge.

The research carried out on literary texts has contributed to the mapping of the linguistic image of time through the analysis of time expressions in the three above-mentioned languages.

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